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ABSTRACT

This guide provides an outline of topics to be considered in designing a collaborative inservice teacher education (ISTE) program. The main headings are as follows: (1) the significance of collaboration as a process for ISTE; (2) how collaboration works; (3) designs for focus on teacher development or school improvement; (4) collaborative problem-solving; (5) how the university delivers services; (6) orienting faculty to collaborative ISTE; (7) integrating ISTE with other training programs; and (8) cost-benefit analysis. A chart for an ISTE delivery system is also included. (DS)

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Herbert Hite
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TEACHER DESIGNED INSERVICE EDUCATION

Discussion Guide

I. The significance of collaboration as a process for ISTE.

A. The usual incentives to teachers for ISTE are phasing out.

1. University credit is less attractive as most teachers complete certification requirements.

B. Teachers have developed organizational skills which enable them to negotiate for those ISTE programs which they find acceptable.

C. ISTE is a political process as well as a learning process.

1. Teachers through their own organizations can and should design their own professional development.

2. As professionals who control their own planned development, they shake off the image of being subjects for remediation.

II. How collaboration works (at Western Washington University's Teacher Corps Project)

A. Participants recognize two areas for governance--policy and program.

1. Policy decisions are made by those with power--who can veto ISTE.

2. Program decisions should be made by those who are competent to make them in the eyes of their constituents. The "planning committee" defines problem areas and assigns priorities to problems.

3. The planning committee assigns Task Forces to problem areas. The Task Forces consist of the best available talent--may or may not consist of teachers.

III. ISTE may be designed to focus upon (a) the professional development of individual teachers, or (b) school improvement.

A. Both are legitimate goals. In fact, an effective program includes both.

B. The design of ISTE, however, will reflect the particular focus.

C. We chose school improvement as our focus, i.e. ISTE is the process for resolving the critical concerns for learners.

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IV. Collaborative problem-solving

A. The local staff agrees on a problem area.

B. Critical problems are assessed by comparing pupil achievement (cognitive and affective) against aspirations of pupils, teachers, parents.

C. The staff organizes for attack on the problems.

1. They improve their own interpersonal communication skills.

2. They set up a tentative schedule of activities.

3. They identify the services they will request from external consultants.

D. They seek more information about the problem area.

E. They examine a variety of strategies for resolving the problems.

F. They select one or more strategies and design tentative evaluation procedures.

G. They carry out the trial strategies.

H. They evaluate what appear to be the results.

I. They decide what to do next.

V. How the university delivers services

A. The typical methods for delivering services are courses and workshops which were developed for campus classes.

1. The usual courses are not specific to a particular site, are too much, do not recognize that the expertise of the student may be equal to the instructor's.

2. Faculty have learned professoring skills which do not apply to the field.

B. In a problem-solving approach, there appear to be two appropriate roles:

1. The role of organizer and broker of other university talent. Only a few possess the communication skills to fulfill this role.

2. The role of specialist who can provide a specific bit of needed information. Many can carry out this role. Sometimes a representative of the school faculty will have to employ extreme measures to get the specialist to limit the information to what is really needed.

C. The accompanying chart shows how university services can fit the model.

D. The university graduate council has approved a sequence of three graduate-level courses which are field-based. The local district pays the tuition of participating teachers. The course is staffed by several instructors. They provide two kinds of offerings:

1. Mini-courses are organized as ten contact hours of insiruction. A teacher representative negotiates with a professor for the specific information needed by a group of teachers.

2. An individual study contract. A team of teachers or an individual teacher contracts to complete a specific problem-solving activity. Three persons must sign off--the principal of the school, the faculty representative, the teachers' organization representative. The sign-offs are evidence that not only is the individual study well-designed, but it also is a significant part of the school-based project.

E. Periodically, all the participants evaluate progress. A faculty specialist monitors this process and calls in other faculty members to assist on special areas.

F. The whole process is designed to facilitiate a collegial mode of problem-solving. Faculty act in their limited areas of expertise. Teachers, too, are recognized as having expertise which is essential to the success of the project. The various provisions for providing services to the project allow for considerable flexibility.

VI. Orienting faculty to collaborative ISTE.

A. Only a portion of the faculty are likely to be interested and competent in a field-based, collaborative project.

B. For those who are interested and likely to be of use to teachers, two kinds of re-training have been attempted:

1. Learning through experience. Faculty perhaps can't be taught, but they can learn by offering mini-courses, or they can furnish limited consultant services to Task Forces.

2. Next year we have planned to institute two, half-time faculty internships each quarter. A committee has been planning all year for activities which professor-interns can carry out, and services which they might provide in a school classroom setting.

VII. Integrating ISTE with other training programs.

A. The collaboration structure for ISTE can also serve to govern other professional education activities.

1. Student teaching, or "clinical programs", for pre-service.

2. Graduate teacher interns (Teacher Corps).

3. Administrative interns, one at each participating school building.

4. Aides.

B. The school site becomes a Training Center.

VIII. Cost-benefit analyses.

A. The university, through its Teacher Corps project, has done some preliminary analysis of cost and benefits of the collaborative problem-solving approach. So far the analysis has included only the process of setting up the collaborative governance system and the cost of individual study contracts.

THE DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR ISTE

Problem-solving Steps	Participants	Role of University
Define problem area	Planning Committee with local staff and community	Faculty member(s) as liaison and resources *(Ed 594j)
Identify resources, consultants	Policy Board (LEA buys credit for local participants)	Approves credit arrangement
Improve interpersonal skills	Planning Committee, Task Forces	Provides Workshop Leader
Collect information	Task Forces Teacher Representative negotiates for services with university faculty members	Mini-courses *(Ed 594k)
Select strategies	Task Forces	Mini-courses *(Ed 594k)
Implement strategies	Individuals and teams	Contracts for carrying out activities Sign-offs by university, teacher organization, administration of local school *(Ed 594k)
Evaluation	Individuals, teams, Task Forces, Planning Committee Policy Board	Faculty specialists *(Ed 594m)

* Ed 594j, k, m - "Practicum in Action Research" A sequence of three graduate level courses, specifically designed for field-based studies..."to resolve persistent school problems".